



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 6, 2016

California Law Enforcement Seizes Planned Parenthood Videos from Home of Activist

On Tuesday evening, the California Department of Justice raided the home of pro-life activist David Daleiden (shown), founder of the Center for Medical Progress, the organization behind the undercover videos that exposed Planned Parenthood's fetal harvesting scheme. Daleiden notes that the raid represents an "attack on citizen journalism" and has vowed to "pursue all remedies to vindicate our First Amendment rights."



The *Washington Post* reports that authorities seized Daleiden's laptop and hard drives from his apartment in Orange County, which had information obtained as part of his 30-month investigation into Planned Parenthood.

Following the California Department of Justice raid, Daleiden posted on Facebook that agents "seized all video footage showing Planned Parenthood's criminal trade in aborted baby parts, in addition to my personal information," but noted that they left behind documents that would implicate Planned Parenthood's illegal behavior.

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"Ironically, while seizing my First Amendment work product, they ignored documents showing the illicit scheme between StemExpress and Planned Parenthood," Daleiden wrote. StemExpress is a California-based company that partnered with Planned Parenthood to supply human blood, cells, and tissue products to biomedical researchers.

Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress released 11 videos last year that exposed Planned Parenthood's illegal activities connected to fetal organ harvesting, including altering abortion procedures to procure fetal tissue, as well as selling fetal tissue for profit. One particular video also revealed that StemExpress did not always obtain consent from mothers to use their fetal tissue, a practice that Fox News noted would be "a serious ethical breach."

CMP's released videos have included secretly recorded comments from executives of Planned Parenthood and StemExpress. Videos have featured undercover footage from clinics — including footage of fetal tissue being handled by workers, footage of fetal tissue from aborted pregnancies, and on-camera interviews with Holly O'Donnell, a former StemExpress procurement technician who admitted in one of the videos that she has encountered "fetuses" that still had beating hearts.

Daleiden had hoped that the videos would prompt lawmakers to investigate Planned Parenthood and ultimately defund it, but instead authorities have turned their attention to Daleiden and the CMP.

Last July, California Attorney General Kamala Harris stated that she would review CMP's videos to determine whether CMP violated state charity registration or reporting requirements. Similarly, a Texas grand jury cleared Planned Parenthood of misusing fetal tissue and instead indicted Daleiden and his



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colleague, Sandra Merritt, on multiple charges, including using fake driver's licenses to gain access to a Houston clinic.

Daleiden contends that Tuesday's raid and Harris' investigation are politically motivated, noting in his Facebook post that Attorney General Harris has accepted campaign contributions from Planned Parenthood.

"Planned Parenthood's bought-and-paid-for AG has steadfastly refused to enforce the law against the baby parts traffickers in our state, while at the same time doing their bidding to harass and intimidate citizen journalists," Daleiden opined.

Former federal prosecutor Matt Heffron, who serves as a legal adviser to Daleiden, contends that Tuesday's raid was "outrageously out of proportion for the type of crime alleged." Heffron adds, "It's a discredit to law enforcement [and] an oppressive abuse of government power."

Predictably, the National Abortion Federation celebrated the news of the raid. "We fully support a thorough investigation into the activities perpetrated by David Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress," president Vicki Saporta said in a statement. "As the evidence has shown in our case, he engaged in a long-running criminal conspiracy. His actions are not without consequences."

And despite the overwhelming evidence presented by CMP in the videos, Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Erica Sackin contends that Daleiden lied in his presentation of the material found in the videos. "David Daleiden's lies are catching up with him," Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Erica Sackin said in a statement. "The only people who engaged in wrongdoing are the extremists who broke multiple laws to spread lies about Planned Parenthood — and it looks like they're finally being held accountable."

Just how Daleiden will fare in the numerous investigations remains to be seen. Past legal precedent in similar cases is rather murky. In 1999, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals determined that ABC News journalists who went undercover to gather information for a story about the Food Lion supermarket chain did in fact act illegally, but did not find that the journalists' actions caused harm because the chain could provide no proof that the broadcast was false. The 1999 decision involved a lawsuit filed by the Food Lion supermarket chain against ABC News regarding a report on the unsanitary quality of the chain's beef and other foods. Food Lion sued ABC for fraud because the journalists behind the report had gained access to the information found within the report by obtaining jobs at Food Lion. In other words, Food Lion was not suing ABC News over the content of the report, but rather how it was obtained.

The appeals court concluded that the ABC employees were guilty of trespassing, and that the press could not be exempt from trespassing and employee loyalty laws, but that Food Lion could not win damages because it could not provide evidence that the broadcast was false.

Gregg Leslie, acting [executive director](#) of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press at the time of the ruling, said the court ultimately "vindicated, for the most part, the First Amendment rights of the press." Likewise, ABC News praised the ruling as "a victory for the American tradition of investigative journalism."

Photo of David Daleiden: AP Images



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